

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-4, 6-9, and 11-14 have been amended.

In the previous office action, claims 4, 9, and 14 were recognized as being drawn to allowable subject matter. The substance of those claims has substantially been incorporated into base claims 1, 6, and 11, and claims 4, 9 and 14 have been rewritten to parallel claims 3, 8, and 13 already present in the application.

As will be appreciated by the Examiner, “the packet flow identifier” is a key factor in this invention. Specifically, “the most recent scheduling time” managed by the management memory and “a number of packets and a total sum length of packets” stored in the internal registers are all linked and controlled by “packet flow identifier” basis. As the Examiner recognized in the previous office action when indicating the substance of claims 4, 9, and 14 are drawn to allowable subject matter, in the present invention, the number of internal registers is equal to the number of processing blocks in the pipeline processing portion (see claims 1, 6, and 11, as amended), because each processing block handles its processing of each packet one by one. Therefore, even if the packet flow identifier of each packet in the pipeline processing portion is different from each other, the maximum number of packet flow identifiers to be controlled is the same number of processing blocks.

By incorporating the above factors previously identified as allowable into independent claims 1, 6 and 11, the claims, as now amended, are believed to be in *prima facie* condition for allowance (i.e., they are distinguished from the Liron reference and the rejection lodged under 35 U.S.C. 103 is overcome). Furthermore, in the previous office action, the Examiner identified a “;” which was a struck out comma. By this amendment, there is no confusion as to the semicolon in claims 1, 6 and 11, and claims 2, 7, and 12 no longer include the phraseology “a own”, thus, all objections lodged in the office action have been satisfied. Finally, with respect to the rejection lodged under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, claims 1, 6 and 11 no longer use “own packet”.

In view of the above, claims 1-4, 6-9, and 11-14 should now be in

condition for allowance, reconsideration and allowance of the claims at an early date is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael E. Whitham', is positioned above the printed name.

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